IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) In a video decoder system, a method for forming a program guide allowing a User to select a function, comprising the steps of:

a) receiving program guide information for display from at least one source, said program guide information including User selectable menu icons representing at least one external device;

b) generating program map information in said decoder for associating a User selectable menu icon with access data enabling initiation of communication between said decoder and said external device in response to selection of said menu icon presented in said program guide information for display;

c) retrieving access data from memory, said access data enabling initiation of communication between said decoder and a device external to said video decoder in response to User selection of said displayed program guide menu option; and

d) formatting said program guide for display such that the displayed program guide visually includes at least the menu icon and titles of a plurality of programs that are capable of being accessed from the external device by a viewer upon selection of the displayed menu icon, the menu icon and the titles both being displayed in a non-overlaying manner with respect to any other content, the menu icon itself having an absence of information for display relating to any communication channels, the titles of the plurality of programs being included in the received program guide information for display.

Claim 2. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, including the step of:

generating program map information for associating different displayed User selectable menu icons with different communication links.

Claim 3. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, including the step of:

generating said program map information to further associate said User selectable menu icon with said access data and a data identifier for acquiring data from said external device.

Claim 4. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, including the step of:

generating program map information for associating a displayed User selectable menu icon with both request access data 5 and response access data for bi-directional communication.

Claim 5. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 4, wherein said request access data includes one of a) a telephone/fax number, b) an Internet identifier or address code and c) conditional 10 access data; and

said response access data includes at least one of a) a data identifier, b) a channel number, and c) a transponder number.

Claim 6. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 4, including the step of:

generating program map information for associating different displayed User selectable menu icons with different address representative codes corresponding to the addresses of information sources.

Claim 7. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, including the step of

generating program map information for associating different displayed User selectable menu icons with different address representative codes corresponding to the addresses of at least two sources selected from: a) a storage source; b) a satellite broadcast source, c) a terrestrial broadcast source; d) a cable broadcast source; e) a computer source; f) a radio transmission source and g) a source accessed via telephone lines.

Claim 8. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, including the step of:

generating program map information for associating different displayed User selectable menu icons with different conditional access information for determining access to programs based upon User entitlement.

Claim 9. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, including the step of:

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generating program map information for associating different displayed User

selectable menu icons with different physical communication network parameters.

Claim 10. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, including

the step of:

deriving said access data from said received program 15 guide information.

Claim 11. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 1, including

the step of:

generating program map information for associating different displayed User

selectable menu icons with different address representative codes corresponding to the

addresses of information sources provided to said decoder by a User.

Claim 12. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 11, wherein

said address representative codes include at least one of a) telephone/fax number

representative information, and b) Internet address representative information.

Claim 13. (Currently Amended) In avideo a video decoder system, a method for

forming a program guide allowing a User to select a function, comprising the steps of:

a) receiving program guide information from at least one source:

b) generating a menu icon for display in a displayed program guide, said menu

icon permitting a User to initiate communication between said video decoder and a

device external to said video decoder;

c) generating program map information in said decoder for associating said menu icon with access data enabling establishment of bi-directional communication between said decoder and said external device in response to selection of said menu icon presented in said program guide information for display;

d) incorporating program guide information and said menu icon in a program guide; and

e) formatting said program guide for display such that the displayed program guide visually includes at least the menu icon and titles of a plurality of programs that are capable of being accessed from the external device by a viewer upon selection of the displayed menu icon, the menu icon and the titles both being displayed in a non-overlaying manner with respect to any other content, the menu icon itself having an absence of information for display relating to any communication channels, the titles of the plurality of programs being included in the received program guide information for display.

Claim 14. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 13, including the step of:

deriving said access data from said program guide information.

Claim 15. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 13, including the step of:

generating program map information for associating different displayed User selectable menu icons with different communication links.; and

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generating said program map information to further associate said menu icon with said access data and a data identifier for acquiring data from said external device.

Claim 16. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 15, including the step of:

associating different access data with corresponding different communication links.

Claim 17. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 13, including the step of:

generating program map information for associating said menu icon with both request access data and response access data,

Claim 18. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 17, wherein said request access data includes one of a) a telephone/fax number, b) an Internet identifier or address code and c) conditional access data; and

said response access data includes at least one of a) a data identifier, b) a channel number, and c) a transponder number.

Claim 19. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 17, including the step of: generating program map information for associating different displayed User selectable menu icons with different address representative codes corresponding to the addresses of information sources.

Claim 20. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 13, including the step of:

generating program map information for associating different displayed User selectable menu icons with different address representative codes corresponding to the addresses of at least two sources selected from: a) a storage source; b) a satellite broadcast source; c) a terrestrial broadcast source: d) a cable broadcast source; e) a computer source; f) a radio transmission source and g) a source accessed via telephone lines.

Claim 21. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 13, including the step of:

generating program map information for associating different displayed User selectable menu icons with different conditional access information for determining access to programs based upon User entitlement.

Claim 22. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 13, including the step of:

generating program map information for associating different displayed User selectable menu icons with different physical communication network parameters .

Claim 23. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 13, including the step of:

generating program map information for associating different displayed User

selectable menu icons with different address representative codes corresponding to the

addresses of information sources provided to said decoder by a User.

Claim 24. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 23, wherein

said address representative codes include at least one of a) telephone/fax number

representative information, and b) Internet address representative information.

Claim 25. (Currently Amended) A The method according to claim 13, including

the step of:

generating program map information for associating different packet identifiers

(PIDs) with program guide information from different sources.

Claim 26. (Currently Amended) In a video decoder system, a method for forming

a program guide allowing a User to select a function, comprising the steps of:

a) receiving program guide information from at least one source;

b) generating a menu icon for display in a displayed program guide, said menu

icon permitting a User to initiate communication between said video decoder and a

device external to said video decoder;

c) generating program map information associating said menu icon with a

communication protocol and both request access data and response access data enabling

establishment of communication between said decoder and said external device in

response to selection of said menu icon presented in said program guide information for display;

      d) incorporating program guide information and ~~s ai d~~ <u>said</u> menu icon in a program guide; and

      e) formatting said program guide for display <u>such that the displayed program guide visually includes at least the menu icon and titles of a plurality of programs that are capable of being accessed from the external device by a viewer upon selection of the displayed menu icon, the menu icon and the titles both being displayed in a non-overlaying manner with respect to any other content, the menu icon itself having an absence of information for display relating to any communication channels, the titles of the plurality of programs being included in the received program guide information for display.</u>

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